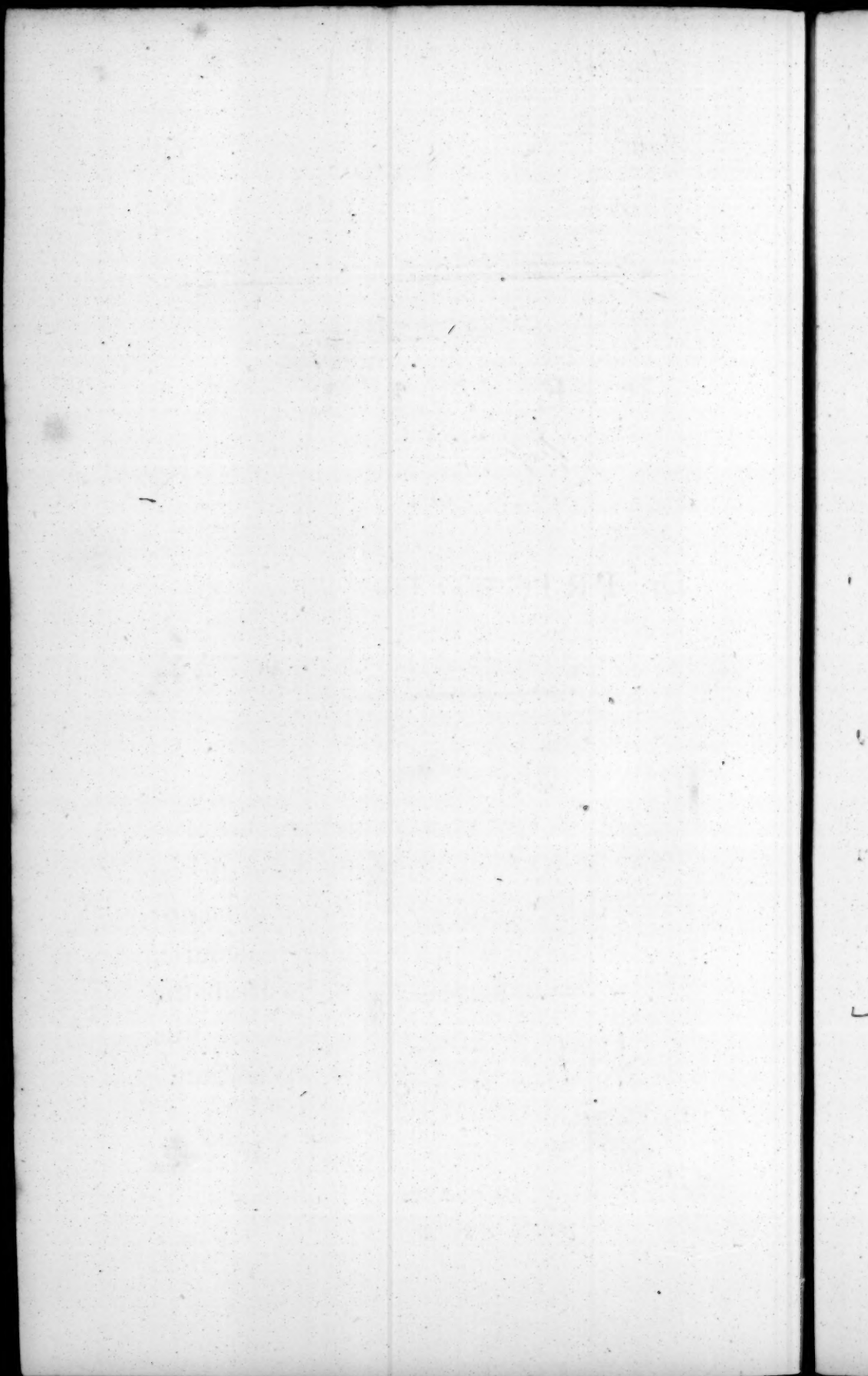


R E V I E W
OF THE
P A M P H L E T,
ENTITLED
“ A D I S C O U R S E
ON THE
“ LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY,
“ BY RICHARD PRICE, &c.”

— EQUO NE CREDITE, TEUCRI.
VIRGIL.

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R E V I E W

O F

Dr. PRICE's DISCOURSE, &c.

I HAD taken up Dr. Price's Discourse "on the love of our country," as he is pleased to term it, expecting to find the subject of the Revolution, the commemoration of which gave rise to this discourse, treated with a degree of enthusiastic warmth. The former publications of this gentleman warranted such an expectation.

A good man cannot recollect that event, without being conscious of its importance.

Every considerate person will rejoice at the emancipation of any country from the chains of bigotry and despotism. And his gratitude will be proportionate to the share he may experience of such emancipation.

It should seem, however, that the benefits of the Revolution had not been clearly perceived in this kingdom, till within this year or two. And it was reserved for the year 1789, to produce a list of persons “ inclined to let their names be transmitted “ to posterity as the friends of the glorious “ Revolution of 1688.”

Every honest man of common sense would be glad, I make no doubt, of adding his name to this list; and would be ready to avow his firm persuasion, that the accession of the Prince of Orange to the English throne was attended with the happiest consequences to this country. He would be proud to enrol himself in the society of Revolutionists, did he suppose that any one
set

set of men deserved to be particularly distinguished by that name; and if he could do so, without incurring at the same time the imputation of being an incendiary, a disturber of the public peace, and a rebel. For painful is the observation, that these epithets, with those of a *Whig*, and a *Revolutionist*, have, of late, borne too much the semblance of synonymous terms.

The pamphlet before me, insidiously dignified with a portion of Scripture, by way of text, tends rather to confirm than to contradict this assertion. And instead of a preacher of the Gospel of peace, instead of a lover of his country, or a supporter of those communities which "put men upon loving instead of damning each other," Dr. Price, I am afraid, will appear to some, as standing forth to sow the seeds of heresy in a religious, and of rebellion in a civil, sense.

In the language of his brethren, I mean the Whigs and Revolutionists, he may be thought basely to insinuate, that, because the nation was in danger of being enveloped in the mistakes of popery, and of feeling the iron hand of tyranny, a hundred years ago, that dangers of the same nature threaten it at this time : and that, because a new system of government, in some degree, was adopted then, a change is absolutely necessary now. He would wish to blind the judgements of the common people with the specious indefinite notion of unrestrained liberty, and would embroil his *dear* country, tranquil and flourishing, and happy as it is, in those miseries, which at present overwhelm a neighbouring kingdom. Hence his repeated warnings against the danger of being “ patient under despotism, and of crouching to tyrants.” Hence his lamentation of “ darkness and “ a want of knowledge.” Hence his incitations “ to act like men.” And hence his
his

his praise of those persons, to whose writings, he tells us, we owe those revolutions “ in which every friend to mankind “ is now exulting.”

But Dr. Price has a particular end in view, and a particular purpose to support. A purpose, that every well-wisher to this country will unite to circumvent. And though his harangue comes from the pulpit, the design of it is not taken from the holy Scriptures. Though the speaker professes to point out to his hearers “ Truth, “ Virtue, and Liberty, as the chief blessings of human nature;” his truth, or knowledge, for he seems to blend the use of these words, is the knowledge of gaining “ protection against injury, and of defending their rights.” Of gaining protection against injury, of which, perhaps, no one is sensible ; and of defending rights, which no one perceives to be invaded.

His virtue and liberty are almost equally indistinguishable as his truth and knowledge.

They comprehend, indeed, "the discharge of the public duties of religion;" though not according to "our established codes of faith and worship." But each person is, if he choose it, to "set up a separate worship for himself." Thus the analogy between his religious and civil liberty is obvious. And thus, having freed the mind from every religious imposition, however sanctioned, he leaves it the better prepared to receive the poison of republicanism and anarchy.

In attempting a short review of the pamphlet in question, it will be impossible to be silent on the subject of religion. And it will, perhaps, be difficult not to say more than may be expected, or desired. But the author, by striking at the root of any prescribed

scribed system of religion, having attempted to destroy one of the strongest cements of the human affections; it is incumbent on every one to throw in his grain of "illumination," and to guard mankind against the weakness and fallacy of such arguments.

In his perplexed discussion of "Truth," Dr. Price wishes to exterminate "mystical doctrines." On which, no more shall be said at present, than, if doctrines above our comprehension, and which may be called mystical, are to be found in the word of God, they ought not, in the opinion of many, to be idly rejected; yet, if the Dr. find such, and cannot reconcile them to his conscience, he is at full liberty, I apprehend, to expunge them from *his own* creed, notwithstanding the "ignorance, bigotry, superstition, intolerance, and persecution," of which he complains. He should, however, be careful not to lead
others

others into error. For *his light* may be darkness, and his *philosophy* little better than paganism.

He goes on, "set religion before them
 " (i. e. before men) as a rational service,
 " not consisting in any rites and ceremonies,
 " but in worshipping God with a
 " pure heart, &c."

We do not want Dr. Price to tell us, that religion is not wholly to consist of rites and ceremonies; these we know are not to form and complete the nature and quality of it. The purity of the heart must be the foundation. But it must have rites and ceremonies, or it will fall to the ground. Every man will have a religion of his own. And, from venturing to serve God as he pleases, he will find the doctrine of liberty, in this respect, very apposite to his various passions, and, in a little time, he will probably not serve God at all.

Rites

Rites and ceremonies are not the offspring of superstition, unless it be such as cannot be proved of divine origin. God has prescribed them for the preservation of true religion, and to keep the memory of Himself alive.

Amidst the confused notions of virtue and liberty, the Dr. seems to insinuate, that it is a virtue to dissent from established forms. But established forms, or codes of faith and worship, are as necessary for the preservation of religion, as ceremonies. By the abolition of either, we should deviate into the licentiousness of thinking and acting as we pleased. And, as we have the written word of God to direct us, we cannot, we must not, do this.

If we judge from the concurrence of all nations that have ever subsisted, we must acknowledge the necessity and the wisdom of a religious establishment: since no one will be found that has not adopted it; nor
would

would it be difficult to prove, that the separation, or declension of most kingdoms, has been owing, in no small degree, to a dereliction of the prescribed faith and worship.

I imagine too the Dr. is in a mistake, when he asserts, that many, in a superior rank of life, "give up all religion," on account of "the defects," or, as he is modest and tolerant enough to say, "the absurdities of established codes of faith and worship."

I apprehend that the refinement, "the good sense, and liberality," as it is variously called, of modern sceptics, tempts them, indeed, to "give up all religion," of whatever kind; not in opposition to any established codes of faith and worship, but because they find it easier to circumscribe their faith than to bind themselves by its dictates. Their minds are not sufficiently impressed with the manifest superintendence

dence of the Almighty, and they hence lose sight of his power, and the consequent necessity of offering Him any worship.

One very material use of a religious establishment, both with regard to faith and worship, founded as ours is, on the holy Scriptures, may be the prevention of that "barbarism in religion," of which this champion for liberty complains. And he surely is too bold when he asserts, that morality is in danger of being supplanted by the use of "our established formularies."

Barbarism in religion, as well as in every concern, might be sooner expected among those who have no form to guide them. Where every teacher is at liberty to prescribe a mode of worship, and to arrogate, as some do, the power of praying, not for himself alone, but for his whole audience. Who can hardly be supposed to join or concur in prayers, the substance or intent of which they cannot possibly understand,
and

and at the spontaneous delivery of which they can have neither time for deliberation, nor opportunity of choice.

The "Liturgy and articles of the established church" are next accused of what no one can or will allow. And let them have been framed when they may, they cannot be thought to bear the marks of "ignorance and barbarity." Considering the age in which the liturgy was nearly settled in its present form, and the almost natural proneness of reformers to depart from one extreme to another, we cannot but wonder at its mildness and liberality. Sublime in its diction, benevolent in its intention, it seems to breathe throughout the pure unsophisticated doctrine of the Gospel. The prayers so adapted to every purpose: those of petition so pathetic, those of thanksgiving so animated. Bold, indeed, is the man, who pretends to offer an extempore prayer, in the name of his whole auditory, that shall be impregnated with
more

more sense, ornamented with more candor, or warmed with more zeal, than the incomparable liturgy of the established church will furnish.

Let not the good Dr. spread the alarm of "priestcraft and tyranny." Terms unseemly to a Christian audience; and which, but for him and his adherents, this kingdom, happy in its every establishment, had forgotten. Mischiefs, which never have been seen to arise from the established church; but which may be readily looked for among those who would be lawless and independent.

From the annihilation of every religious establishment, the Dr. proceeds, by an easy and a natural transition, to overturn civil government. And finds no step more likely to answer this end, than diffusing a contempt, not only of the supreme authority, but of "civil governors,"* altogether.

* P. 33.

And

And he rouses our attention by telling us, that " the rebellion of kings against their
 " people has been more common, and done
 " more mischief than the rebellion of people
 " against their kings." Suppose this vague and bold assertion to be true. What then? What would the Dr. infer hence? Or what insinuate? I shall leave the people at large to judge, or the Whigs to explain.

He goes on to represent the king as deriving " all his consequence from the people." As the " servant, not the sovereign," of the public: with much falsity and abuse of the same nature. The pretence of quoting two or three texts of Scripture in support of obedience to the higher powers is too shallow not to be seen through by the slowest discerners. Nor can it have any weight, mixed as it is with so many expressions to which I can give no other name than that of sedition.

The

The king, as long as he complies with the original compact arising from the coronation oath, and which a late writer, in answer to Mr. Paley, has ingeniously described ; and as long as he does not invade the established form of government, is *not* the servant, but the sovereign of the people. He does *not* derive "all his consequence" from the people ; he derives it from his ancestors. His "superiority" and his "majesty" are his own. He possesses them both as "inherent" qualities, as much as any thing can be called so, which is possessed or obtained by lawful descent.

The government of this kingdom is *not* elective ; it is hereditary. Nor have the people, by any means, the power or right of bestowing or withholding it. The lawful heir to the crown has a right to demand it by the establishment of the very Revolution ; and it is the duty of every Englishman, as a friend to the Revolution, to support his demand.

The greatest fear and difficulty, which occurred at the convention of 1688, was the fear of infringing the hereditary descent of the crown, and of establishing an elective monarchy. After long and various arguments, it was resolved, that the crown of this kingdom should be hereditary, and the family to which it should descend was carefully and specifically marked out. They therefore who attempt to undermine, or to weaken this lawful right, deserve not the name of Whigs, of Revolutionists, or lovers of their country, nor any other name that I can imagine, than that of foes to peace and order; of incendiaries, of rebels. What can such audacious, deceitful language mean, that the king has “no right, no authority, no majesty vested in himself?” What intention can it have, but to inflame the minds of the people, to alienate their affection and obedience, and, in the end, to subvert the government?

Though

Though the Revolution is justly held up as one of the greatest blessings this country ever experienced, yet the Dr. urges, that it was inadequate, and that something still remains to be done to make it a "perfect work." And to shew what this is, he introduces three principles of the "Society for commemorating the Revolution." Which are,

"The right to liberty of conscience in religious matters."

"The right to resist power when abused." And

"The right to choose our own governors; to cashier them for misconduct; and to frame a government for ourselves."

On the last of which principles does he, with much ingenuity and falsehood, assert, that the Revolution was founded. I say

falsehood, unless he can prove an act of necessity to be an act of right. If we should ever be again in the situation of seeing the throne vacant, and of having no lawful heir to fill it, we should be again under the absolute necessity of choosing a governor. But how this necessity can be called a right, or be implied as a right existing at all times, I do not understand. The declarations at the Revolution speak of no such right; but, on the contrary, by specifying the future descent of the crown, they destroy every notion of it. It behoves the state, therefore, to be very careful of admitting to any participation of the government, a set of persons, who can betray a wish to exert a power so pregnant with mischief to this country.

Of the justice, on the score of liberality, of allowing an established system of religion, however universal the adoption of such a measure may be, it is not my business to argue. But I apprehend, that, were
there

there no prescription in the case, every state would naturally fall into the admission of such a system.

Whatever were the religious opinions of the supreme ruler, or rulers, would, in a little time, be prevalent among the people. And, if there were various opinions, that, which promised the most safety and quiet to the state, would be adopted and protected by law. It is on this principle, that we have seen protestantism happily fixed on as the established religion of this country. Nor has there yet been any better method devised of securing the various blessings which this religion affords, than by excluding all but the genuine members of the established church from offices of trust and emolument. Hence have been erected, says the learned Blackstone, "two bulwarks, " called the Corporation and Test Acts." Statutes, which, far from intending to burthen the conscience of any one, impose only on those, who would be employed in

the direction of the state, an obligation to prove that they are members and friends of the established religion.

Under the weight of this obligation, the government was committed to the Prince of Orange. And by virtue of the same, according to a statute of W. & M. all subsequent kings have held their authority. Absolve them from this salutary tie, and we might see a papist emulate the throne; we might again be shaken and divided by that religious anarchy, which the Reformation, and the Revolution, have combined to dispel.

Such are the principles, which Dr. Price brands with the opprobrious title of “ public iniquities.” But let us not be deceived by the language of faction and envy.

The right to liberty of conscience in religious matters is, in this kingdom, denied
to

to no one. The compliance with any mode of religious worship is equally unlimited.

With the right to resist power when abused, that is, according to prescribed legal forms, no Englishman is unacquainted. But no Englishman has a right to take up arms against his king and country, merely to support an opinion of his own, be it of a religious, or of a civil nature. And whoever would wickedly insinuate that this conduct is allowable, let him assume whatever name or character he please, a Whig, a Revolutionist, or a Lover of his Country, he deserves to be shunned as a pest to society, and to be discarded from all confidence. If any one is aggrieved, if he be oppressed by any power, it is the glory of this kingdom that he can appeal to the laws for redress. Any other mode of resistance is rebellion.

The right to choose our own governors;
to cashier them for misconduct; and to

frame a government for ourselves ; does not exist, I will be bold to say, in these days, but in the imagination of Independents and Republicans.

It is much easier to assert, than to prove. And, on minds unused to meditation, assertions, delivered with boldness, and in tolerable language, may have great influence. Hence the unwarrantable expressions in the pamphlet under consideration. To those which have been mentioned may be added, “ that the state of this country is such as “ renders it an object of concern and anxiety. That it wants the grand security “ of public liberty. That a monstrous “ weight of debt is crippling it. And that “ it is becoming every day more reconcilable to encroachments on the securities “ of its liberties.”

I appeal to the immediate situation of the country for the truth of this. And I would ask the people in general, if they think

think this kingdom has ever been possessed of more power, more dignity, or more wealth ; or whether it has ever had a better prospect of peace, than at the present moment ?

But liberty is a captivating, treacherous term ; and has done more mischief, in the misapplication of it, than any word in the language.

If we were in the state that Dr. Price pretends, is it the “ patriotic services ” of him and his adherents only that can have power to emancipate us ? Or can we expect safety in any respect from those persons, on whose account, in a great degree, the restraint on liberty, if the statutes particularly complained of can be deemed so, were found necessary.

But it is not the repeal of the Test Act, for which the Dr. is much concerned, no farther than that would be a step to what
alone

alone can satisfy the nonconformists, as one of them has absolutely declared, viz. the establishing Presbyterianism on the ruins of Episcopacy.

For the accomplishment of this, the pious Christian sounds to arms. He places before his hearers the bewitching picture of " thirty millions of people, indignant " and resolute, spurning at slavery, and " leading their king in triumph." But thirty millions of insurgents, on whatever occasion, and a king led in triumph, can be an object of delight only to a barbarian.

If now is the time for persons of such seditious principles to exert themselves, now is the time for every true lover of his country to oppose them. Not by oppression and tumult: but by taking care to exclude them from any share in the legislation.

It

It is not always that reformation is to be considered as innovation. But, with respect to the present designs of the Nonconformists, any enlargement of the indulgence, which they already experience, would be innovation of the most dangerous kind. They enjoy, I repeat, full toleration in religious matters. They have unlimited liberty of conscience. And any complaint on this subject can be only looked on as a cloak to cover darker schemes ; and schemes which the history of this country will inform us they have had in contemplation, before the grievances, they now hold out, existed.

The same mistaken liberality, which would extend *their* power, and render *them* eligible to places of trust, or to any share in the public administration, might be justly challenged by Nonconformists of every denomination.

If dissenters, that is, Presbyterians, are admitted into the direction of public affairs,

fairs, an extent of the same liberality would admit Catholics, or Jews; as the Dr. observes, with great address, has lately been the case in the emperor's dominions. And if we so far depart from a fundamental principle of the constitution, as to allow the king the power of employing, in any department of the state, persons of such opposite sentiments; let us consider what may be the consequence should we ever see a king on the throne, who may be inclined, from whatever motive, to favour those, who have always and invariably been enemies to all toleration.

The mischiefs too, which might arise, from councils divided by religious opinions, may be thoroughly perceived from what has already happened by the same cause.*

It is now well known, that the dissenters are attempting to lay an obligation on

* See the reigns of Charles I. and II. and even of Elizabeth; in which the various restrictions that have, from time to time, been laid on Dissenters, are sufficient proofs of their turbulent disposition.

every

every candidate for the new parliament to vote for the repeal of the Test Acts. Promising their suffrages on those conditions. Such are the persons who are pretending to struggle for "liberty of conscience, and for "freedom of election." But who, to complete their own views, would thus bind the consciences of others. Which alone may afford a hint of their fallacious conduct.

There is no fear, however, that either house of parliament will be deluded by them.

The peace and safety of the church and state are inseparably connected; and became so, in an especial manner, by the accession of king William. He is therefore no friend to his king or to his country, who would disturb either; or who would encroach, in the smallest degree, on the principles laid down at the Revolution.

A TRUE WHIG.

